

THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 1878

EASTERN EXCAVATIONS

Mycenæ. A Narrative of Researches and Discoveries at Mycenæ and Tiryns. By Dr. Henry Schliemann. (London : Murray, 1878.)

Troy and its Remains. A Narrative of Researches and Discoveries made on the Site of Ilium and the Trojan Plain. By Dr. Henry Schliemann. (London : Murray, 1875.)

Exhibition of Antiquities from Hissarlik at the South Kensington Museum. By Dr. Henry Schliemann.

Cyprus: its Ancient Cities, Tombs, and Temples. A Narrative of Researches and Excavations. By General Louis Palma di Cesnola. (London : Murray, 1877.)

TWO Eastern questions occupy the attention of Europe at the present time—one relating to the present, and, it is to be feared greatly, to the future ; the other has reference to the past, and to the bridging over of that little-known protohistoric period which connects the civilisation of the far east, that is, Egypt and Assyria, with the culture of ancient Greece, to which we western Europeans are so much indebted. Different conditions of thought are engaged in the study of these two questions, yet both are connected, for the present crisis in the East represents the returning current of that same stream of culture which was flowing westward towards the dawn of our era. What Egypt and Assyria lent to Greece she passed on to Etruria and Rome, and the Romans carried to the shores of the Atlantic, there developing and fructifying, it has passed back eastward in a return wave, reviving the ancient monarchies in its path. Rome has regained its ancient landmarks. Germany has consolidated. Austria has been pushed, and is still pushing eastward. Greece is proclaiming the revival of its ancient nationality, and this will doubtless be followed in times to come by the resuscitation of Egypt and Palestine. The Turk, representing the last wave of the western flow, has been met and swamped by the returning ebb.

The time has been well chosen by our archæologists for an examination into the sites of those ancient cities whose history corresponds most closely to the period on which we are now entering ; and to us English the parallel between the two eras has special interest. At a time when our fleets are massing in these seas in order to keep open our communication with the East, we are reminded that it was by means of a seafaring people that civilisation was spread over this region in ancient times. The comparison between ourselves and the Phœnicians has been often drawn ; like causes produce like results. For the same reason that they peopled the shores and islands of the Mediterranean with their colonies, we have caused them to be studded with our military posts. What the Phœnicians did for the flow of civilisation in days of old, we, if we fulfil our functions rightly, shall do for its returning ebb at the present time. Other European nations are concerned in continental movements, but, like the Phœnicians, our path is by the sea. Syria, Cyprus, Crete, and Greece was the line they traversed, and this is the line which sooner or later we appear destined to occupy in the struggle to come.

It is not well to carry a simile too far, but one other parallel, as a natural outcome of the instincts of the two people, may be fairly drawn. It is said that in art, in modern times at least, we have no style of our own. Neither had they ; devoted to navigation and commerce, their art, instead of being indigenous, was borrowed from the nations with whom they traded. This is well shown in the collection of antiquities from Cyprus, for the knowledge of which we are indebted to General di Cesnola, the American consul in that island. Cyprus was one of the first islands colonised by the Phœnicians. Three distinct styles of art are recognised in the Cypriote pottery, sculptures and glyptic representations, the Assyrian, the Egyptian, and the Greek. In the temple of Golgoi the objects belonging to these three different styles were found separately placed, the Egyptian by themselves, the Assyrian in like manner, and the Greek also together, showing in the opinion of the author that they were collected at different epochs, spreading over a long series of years. On the other hand a considerable number of the objects figured in General Cesnola's book distinctly include both the Assyrian and the Egyptian, for example, in the patera from Curium, figured in p. 329 ; the centre figure represents a winged warrior, probably a king, fighting with a lion, which is in true Assyrian style, whilst the outer circle of the same vessel is ornamented with figures that are as purely Egyptian. Probably between the eighth and tenth centuries B.C. both styles may have prevailed in Cyprus at different times, but it is evident that a period arose in which both styles as well as the Greek were united, and closely imitated, and this constitutes the chief characteristic of the Cypriote art.

Very different in this respect are some of the objects discovered by Dr. Schliemann in the royal tombs at Mycenæ, which, though rude and barbarous—more so, indeed, than the majority of the Cypriote antiquities—nevertheless show some attempt at realism. More especially may be noticed the bull's head, the bas reliefs, and some of the gold ornaments. In these we perceive an absence of that servile imitation of earlier styles which has been noticed as the characteristic of Cypriote art ; and although falling far short of Hellenic greatness, there is a freedom from conventionality which left the artist at liberty to turn to nature as his instructor, and thus, with the aid of a little imagination, we may perhaps recognise potentially in these rude designs the germs of those qualities which made Greek art so famous in the times that followed.

The concentric circles of the Cypriote ornamentation are here replaced by a system of coil ornaments which resemble those in use during the bronze age of Europe rather than anything to be found in the countries immediately to the eastward. Notwithstanding this, however, the connection with Cyprus is apparent in many of the forms. The rude terra-cotta figures of men and animals correspond very closely with those found in Cyprus as well as Rhodes, and the long-nosed warriors drawn on the fragment of a painted vase (p. 133, "Mycenæ") might clearly claim family relationship with the lady figured on the Cypriote vase in Fig. 394 of General Cesnola's work. The mode of ornamenting the eyebrows by means of parallel incised lines is distinctly Cypriote. But perhaps the objects which most

clearly attest the connection between the two places are the golden diadems (p. 186 "Mycenæ") found on the heads of the bodies in the tombs. These consist of pointed oval plates of gold, sometimes highly ornamented and having at the points, small holes by which they were fastened round the head with a wire. The position of the graves in which similar diadems to these were found at Idalion in Cyprus proves distinctly that they were more recent than the graves of the Phœnician period which lay beneath them. Similar forms of golden diadems from Kouyunjik are in the British Museum. The golden diadems found at Idalion are shown by these associated remains to belong to a more advanced period of art than the larger and more massive ones discovered in the royal tombs in the Agora at Mycenæ, the former being probably of the Greco-Roman age. Nevertheless the identity of the forms ought not to escape attention when considering the relative antiquity of the finds; they were, as Dr. Schliemann truly remarks (p. 189), in very extensive use in early times, and an investigation into the origin of these peculiar brow ornaments will without doubt have an important bearing on the period of the interments with which they are associated. It is to be regretted that General Cesnola, although he mentions the finding of these diadems in p. 75 of his work gives no illustration of them, but a number of them were sold at Sotheby's some years ago, and the remarks here made are based upon observations made at the time of the sale.

Turning now to Hissarlik our attention is naturally drawn in the first place to the so-called owl-faced vases which form so large a proportion of the antiquities discovered by Dr. Schliemann there. No subject has been more frequently applied to the ornamentation of funereal and other vases than the representation of a human face, as examples of which we may call to mind the rude jars representing Besa or Typhon in the Egyptian department of the British Museum, or our own Bellarmin jugs of the sixteenth century. Such representations are usually at first realistic, and expressive of the best endeavour of the designer, but in process of time the forms suffer degradation in the hands of inexpert or hasty workmen; the transmutation of form observable on British coins affords a well-known illustration of the gradual changes produced by means of imperfect copies, and similar degradation is often seen in the tribal and other ornaments and badges of modern savages. On the pottery found in the Peruvian graves a human face is of frequent occurrence. Some of these figures of faces are equal to the best productions of Cyprus or Mycenæ, whilst in others the features are so much dwarfed and distorted that little more than a line for the eyebrows and another for the nose remains to denote the intention of the potter, the other features having disappeared in those examples in which nothing more than a rude symbolism has been aimed at. An examination of the large collection of vases from Hissarlik, now exhibited by Dr. Schliemann at South Kensington is sufficient to show that this has been the true history of the *γλαυκῶπις*, or "owl-faced Goddess Minerva." In some of these vases all the features of the human face are present; in others some of them disappear or become conventionalised; the mouth is no longer represented, and the nose shrinks into a small beak-like projection beneath the eyebrows. Yet

if the form of it is looked at carefully, it will be seen that it is still a nose, and in no case has it been the intention of the potter to represent a beak; its position is never that of an owl's beak beneath the line of the eyes. The eye of an owl is surrounded on all sides by a complete disc of feathers, but in no single instance has the lower and inner side of such a disc been represented on these vases; even in the most degraded examples the line which sweeps round the upper and outer portions of the eye is still seen to be an eyebrow, which is a feature that is entirely wanting in an owl. In many cases the ear has been retained, where the mouth has disappeared, and the ear is still distinctly human. It may be safely said that there is no example in the whole collection at South Kensington in which the form of an owl's face has been intentionally represented. In like manner the long upright projections on the sides of some of the vases, which, when associated with the symbolic features above spoken of, have been said to represent the wings of an owl, can be shown by a selected series to be nothing more than the handles of the pots developed and adapted to use in another form. Other handles, of which most of the pots are provided with three or four, have been dwarfed so as to dwindle into a mere reminiscence, marked by slightly raised lines on the sides of the vessels. Similar developments of handles may be seen in the specimens of terra-cotta lamps exhibited by the Palestine exploration committee at South Kensington. Then again, the small flat stone objects figured in page 36 of Dr. Schliemann's book, "Troy and its Remains," and supposed by him to be Athena idols, are clearly nothing more than symbolic vases. The lines denoting the face on these stone objects represent the face on the vases, the head, neck, and body of the vase and the horizontal lines across the neck marking the separation between the cover and body of the vase are all shown on these miniature models, which correspond to the stone models of vases which at a later period replaced those previously employed in Egyptian tombs, and it was no doubt by means of some such symbolism that these model vases at Hissarlik came to be introduced.

The peculiar "crown-shaped" covers found by Dr. Schliemann at Hissarlik, and figured at page 25, are of interest, and serve by their form to fix the position of the Hissarlik antiquities in point of sequence. These crown-like lids are survivals of the neck and handles of earlier forms whose history is to be traced in other parts of the Levant. The form of vase with two handles, one on either side joining the mouth and body of the vessel, of which a good example is represented on page 102 of General Cesnola's work, appears to have given rise to a shape with a closed or dummy neck, in which the form of the neck and handles are retained, but the real opening is in a funnel-shaped mouth adjoining the dummy neck. Dr. Schliemann found specimens of these altered vases in the tumulus at Sparta and also at Mycenæ. An illustration of one from the latter place is given at page 64 of his work on Mycenæ. They are common in Rhodes, examples of which may be seen in specimens from Ialysos, in the British Museum. They are also found in Attica, Cyprus, and in Egyptian tombs. The "crown-shaped" covers found at Hissarlik represent a further degradation of this form in which the neck has disappeared, the mouth

and handles only remaining. Three and four handles have been substituted, in some cases, for the double handle of the earlier vessels. The cover, with the dummy mouth and handles, of course occupies the position previously occupied by the true neck and handles on the top of the vase. As these crown-shaped covers are found in the lowest stratum, the "earliest city" discovered by Dr. Schliemann at Hissarlik, it follows, if the history of these forms has been correctly stated above, that the whole of the Hissarlik antiquities are of comparatively recent prehistoric date, though belonging, no doubt, to a people in a barbarous condition of culture, which accounts for the number of rude stone implements found from top to bottom throughout the excavations.

The so-called crest of the helmet of Athena (p. 283, Hissarlik), is a further degradation of these crown-shaped tops, and represents the dwarfed survival of one of the handles, the connecting links being represented by three specimens in the collection at South Kensington, where the vestiges of all three handles are shown in their proper places, and these were subsequently replaced by one, transferred for convenience' sake from the position formerly occupied by the three to the centre of the lid. In short, the history of every form may be traced by connecting links in the specimens exhibited at South Kensington, the whole collection forms a continuous sequence which, by judicious arrangement of connected forms, is capable of demonstration, and it is to be hoped that some such arrangement may be adopted before this interesting collection leaves the place. To apply the expression "Darwinism" to such a sequence of forms is no mere figure of speech, it expresses the truth as fully in its relation to savage art and ornament as to the forms of nature. Conservatism, acquired habits, and incapacity for improvement on the one hand, love of variety, economy of time and trouble, and imperfect copying on the other, combine to produce those slow and gradual changes which are characteristic of all barbarous art. Every object marks its own place in sequence by means of its form, and it is the recognition of this principle which supplies the place of written records in those prehistoric and prehistoric phases of culture with which we are dealing. Earlier forms are retained side by side with the more advanced ones and are applied to those objects and uses for which they appear fittest. If any evidence were wanting to disprove the absurd imputations that have been cast upon the genuineness of these antiquities, these connected varieties would alone suffice to prove that they were the work of a people in a very primitive condition of civilisation. Whatever difference of opinion may exist as to some of Dr. Schliemann's deductions no reasonable archaeologist will be found to dispute the extraordinary merit of his discoveries. We are glad to hear that he is about to resume his excavations at Hissarlik. To the deep research and disinterested enthusiasm which has already placed him in the front rank of explorers, will now be added a large amount of archaeological experience and knowledge of allied forms that he has acquired since his first excavations were conducted at this place, leading us to hope that his future discoveries will exceed them all in interest and importance.

PROFESSOR BELL'S "SELBORNE"

The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne, in the County of Southampton. By the late Rev. Gilbert White, formerly Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. Edited by Thomas Bell, F.R.S., F.L.S., F.G.S., &c., Professor of Zoology in King's College, London. 8vo, 2 vols. (London: Van Voorst, 1877.)

THE edition of this classic work for so many years expected from the hands of Prof. Bell, has at length appeared, and readers will regard it with much gratification and a little disappointment. The former feeling will arise from the large amount of new matter which it contains, and the latter from the conviction which cannot but force itself upon them that more was to be made of the whole than the editor seems to have been aware of. Yet Prof. Bell's long life—it is more than fifty years since he first won his spurs in the field of science—and his invaluable services in so many departments of zoology, render us very unwilling to say more than we are compelled in detraction of this, his latest labour, and the child of his old age. He writes now, as he always has written, pleasantly enough, but he fails to give us the notion that he has done the best he could with the materials placed at his disposal, and with his other unequalled opportunities. It is evident that his task grew upon him, and that a considerable portion must have been printed off before its extent was determined. This, indeed, is not an uncommon thing with young authors and editors; but Prof. Bell's literary experience, and the long time he is known to have had the present work in preparation, should have guarded him from an error of the kind. We might almost infer that when the memoir was written he had not mastered all the details of the deeply interesting correspondence which forms the bulk of his second volume, and certainly that he had not decided how many, and which, of the letters it contains should be given to the world. It is sufficient for us now to say that there is not one of them that could have been spared, for we must presently return to their consideration.

That any memoir of Gilbert White must, from the scarcity of facts relating to him, give a meagre account of that great and estimable naturalist, we are ready to admit, and that Prof. Bell's is at the same time far more copious than any other that has been published, will be obvious to all who are acquainted with the subject. But we cannot help regretting that the chief biographical facts have not been set forth in a clearer light than they appear, and proper as it is to tell us something of all the members of the family, we unfortunately find least is told us of those members of whom we should like to know most. Gilbert White had three brothers who were distinctly men of capacity above the average, beside two others much less, or hardly at all, distinguished. Of the former, Thomas, we are told, was successful in trade, and became a F.R.S., but in what trade or when he died we are left ignorant. Benjamin was the well-known publisher of natural history books—among others of Pennant's—for whom Prof. Bell has some hard words, not, perhaps, wholly undeserved, but it is very probable, to say the least, that had not Gilbert, through his brother, become acquainted with Pennant the "Natural History of Selborne" would never have